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SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT SPEAKER MASHADANI CITES FAILURES OF
MALIKI GOVERNMENT

Classified By: Political Counselor Matt Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Mahmoud Mashadani, the ever-prickly Council of Representatives (CoR) Speaker, told PolCouns September 6 that he felt slighted at not being invited with other GOI leaders to join President Bush's September 2 visit to Anbar. Mashadani complained about what he called the failure of PM Maliki's administration to address issues of detainees and sectarian violence or provide for basic public services. He said it was better to keep Maliki than make a change, but was critical of Maliki's advisors. He called for more technocrats to head the ministries, noting he would also like to see the number of ministers reduced in order to improve efficiency in decisionmaking in the Council of Ministers (CoM). He blamed delays in passing the provincial powers and oil/gas laws on the CoM. End summary.

MASHADANI FEELS MARGINALIZED

¶2. (C) In a meeting with PolCouns on September 6, CoR Speaker Mahmoud Mashadani complained that he was not invited to Anbar during President Bush's September 2 visit. He noted President Talabani and PM Maliki left for Anbar "without giving us a hint" and he learned of the visit through the media. He added the CoR is being marginalized by the Maliki administration, with resultant delays in passing the provincial powers law and the oil/gas law.

¶3. (C) Mashadani complained about what he termed the failures of the Maliki administration, saying Maliki's government had not sufficiently addressed the issues of detainees, sectarian violence against innocent people, or providing basic public services such as electricity. He added that people deserve to work and complained that the unemployment rate remains high. He said he "likes" PM Maliki but thinks he has a bad group of advisors around him. He added that the executive branch of the Iraqi Government must cooperate with the CoR or "it will fail."

¶4. (C) Mashadani also raised the plight of over four million refugees and displaced Iraqis and complained about the limited level of assistance they are currently receiving from the U.N. He cited the need for the GOI to make some decisions on how to deal with militias and improve human rights. At the same time, Mashadani raised the need to coordinate with political blocs to bring about national reconciliation. He said "we are all in the same ship" and "there is risk of losing the battle" if things do not change. Mashadani noted the importance of having capable technocrats in the executive branch of the government. He said it is better to keep PM Maliki rather than make a change, but called for the replacement of unqualified ministers. He noted his support for the expansion of the decisionmaking base to 31 and thinks the CoM should be trimmed down to twenty-two ministers.

WILL TAWAFUQ RETURN?

15. (C) In response to PolCouns' inquiry regarding whether Tawafuq might return to the government, Mashadani simply said the Tawafuq bloc believes PM Maliki has not accomplished anything and he should be "let go" if that is the case. He did not address whether the Tawafuq ministers would return. At the same time, he said the CoR does not have anything against PM Maliki personally. On the status of the provincial powers law, Mashadani said there are negotiations in the CoM and the Ministry of Justice is reviewing the text.

He added that this law and the oil/gas law "must be sent to the CoR so they can be discussed." He added that Maliki is concerned the provinces will have too much power if the provincial powers law passes. He added the people have delegated this issue to the CoR to solve the problem.

A SMALL NOTE OF OPTIMISM

16. (C) Despite many of Mashadani's complaints about the executive branch of the government, he did comment that he thinks the security situation is improving and said he "sees the light at the end of the tunnel." He said that Sunnis in various areas in Baghdad are returning to their neighborhoods.

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